SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE ORGANISATION

**Question No. 95**

**Senator Cash asked the following question at the hearing on 25 May 2011:**

a) What is the current average time it takes ASIO to complete security checks? (From the time of the introduction of the new system until now.)

b) What training did ASIO provide to DIAC staff in relation to conducting security assessments?

c) Do DIAC staff have access to ASIO internal systems in order to process these security assessments?

d) How long was the implementation phase with DIAC regarding the new system of processing security assessments?

e) How does ASIO manage the assessment process with DIAC in terms of ensuring the decisions made by DIAC staff are as accurate as those that would be made by ASIO staff?

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

a) Prior to commencement of the new Framework, the average time to complete a security assessment was 74 days. As advised by the Director-General during Senate Estimates, ASIO is unable to provide a meaningful statistic representing the current average assessment time as the new framework only commenced on 1 April 2011. ASIO anticipates, however, that following the implementation of the new referral framework, the majority of security assessments will be finalised in a shorter period of time. DIAC has advised that, on average, an Irregular Maritime Arrival (IMA) remains in detention for 224 days awaiting DIAC's overall consideration of whether to issue an Australian visa.

b) It would not be appropriate for ASIO to provide specific details regarding training and other access arrangements in place between ASIO and DIAC. ASIO maintains responsibility for undertaking security assessments, managing the security assessment process and establishing criteria within the Framework.

c) See answer to part b) above.

d) With DIAC agreement, the new framework commenced implementation in mid March 2011 with IMA cases subject to the new framework from 1 April 2011.

e) The streamlined processing framework ensures an intelligence-led and risk-managed approach to security assessments in order to focus on more complex cases requiring greater intelligence investigation and on longstanding IMA cases. ASIO maintains overall responsibility for managing the security process.

For further details regarding the new security referral process, please refer to responses to Question 91.